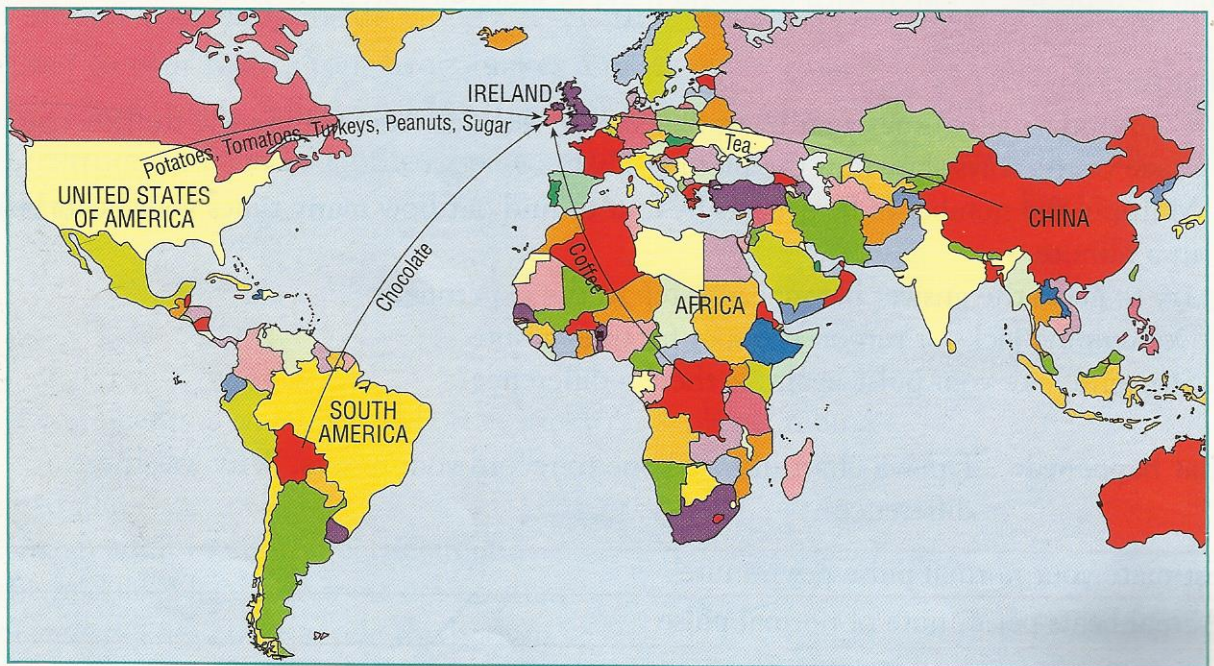


11 – Farming and Food

Travel and Food

Long ago, people in Europe travelled and traded between countries. Later, sailors went to the countries of the New World, such as America. Travellers brought home different foods from many places. An Englishman called Sir Walter Raleigh brought the first potatoes from America to Europe about 400 years ago. Other foods like tomatoes, turkeys, peanuts and sugar also came from the Americas. Sailing ships brought tea from China, coffee from Africa and chocolate from South America. In those days chocolate was used to make a hot drink. Nobody ate it!



Preserving Food

Long ago, it was hard to keep food fresh. Only people who lived near the sea, a lake or a river ate fish because it went bad quickly. Later, people learned to dry, smoke and pickle fish, meats and other foods. **Preserving** food in this way meant it lasted much longer. Food was first tinned less than 200 years ago. Before fridges were invented, a big block of ice was used to keep food cold.



Cooking Food

Before fire was discovered, people ate food raw as there was no way of cooking it. The first time meat was cooked was probably when somebody dropped it in the fire by mistake. They probably thought it tasted better that way. After that they cooked meat over a fire or on flat stones heated by the fire.



❁ Would You Like Your Food Cooked This Way?

Before pots were made, food was boiled in a pit. The pit was lined with skins and filled with water. The water was heated up with hot stones from the fire. The meat was put into the hot water to cook. Hot stones were added to the water to keep it hot.



70 years ago, Irish houses had open hobs, where the cooking and baking was done. Large black pots and kettles hung from a crane over an open fire. Bread was baked in a bastable. This was a flat, shallow pot which was put on

the fire. Hot coals were put on the lid so that the heat came from above and below. Later, stoves heated by coal or wood were used.

Today, people use electric and gas cookers and microwave ovens to cook food. Modern cookers have a thermostat to keep the oven at an even temperature. Food and farming has changed a lot through the years.



Exercises

1. Who brought potatoes to Europe?
2. Where did (a) coffee (b) tea (c) chocolate come from?
3. Why was the discovery of fire important?
4. How was meat boiled before pots were made?
5. How did people make food last longer?
6. How was food cooked in Ireland 70 years ago?
7. How is food cooked today?
8. What rude habit did the Romans have?

Did You Know?

Good Manners

- In Roman times, it was polite to burp after eating to show how much you had enjoyed the meal.
- Guests often brought napkins and filled them with food, which they took home to eat later.
- The coating on non-stick pots and pans was developed during the space programme.
- Sliced bread could only be bought after 1930.

Dictionary

Preserving: treating food so it will not go off.